Interest Groups

Chapter 9
The Nature of Interest Groups

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Section 1
The Role of Interest Groups

• Attempt to influence the making and content of public policy
• Tend to operate in Washington, DC and the 50 State capitals
• Analyze this quote in relation to interest groups: “Where the body is, there will the vulture be gathered.”
Political Parties and Interest Groups

• Political Parties and Interest Groups are similar in that they are made of people who unite for some political purpose.

• Major differences are: In making nominations, their primary focus, and the scope of their interests
In Making Nominations

**Political Parties**
Nominate candidates for political office

**Interest Groups**
Do not nominate candidates
**Primary Focus**

*Political Parties*
Interested in winning elections & controlling government

*Interest Groups*
Concerned with controlling or Influencing policies of government
Scope of Interests

**Political Parties**
Concerned with whole range of public affairs
With everything of concern to voters

**Interest Groups**
Concentrate only on those matters that affect the interest of their members
Interest Groups- Good or Bad?

- You must weight functions & criticisms
- Functions:
  ~ stimulate interest in public affairs
members represented on shared attitudes rather than where they live
provide helpful info to gov’t
vehicle of voter participation
• Criticism:
  ~ push own interest which are not always in best interest of other Americans
  ~ it's hard to tell how many people a group really represents
  ~ groups use under-handed tactics such as bribery or threats